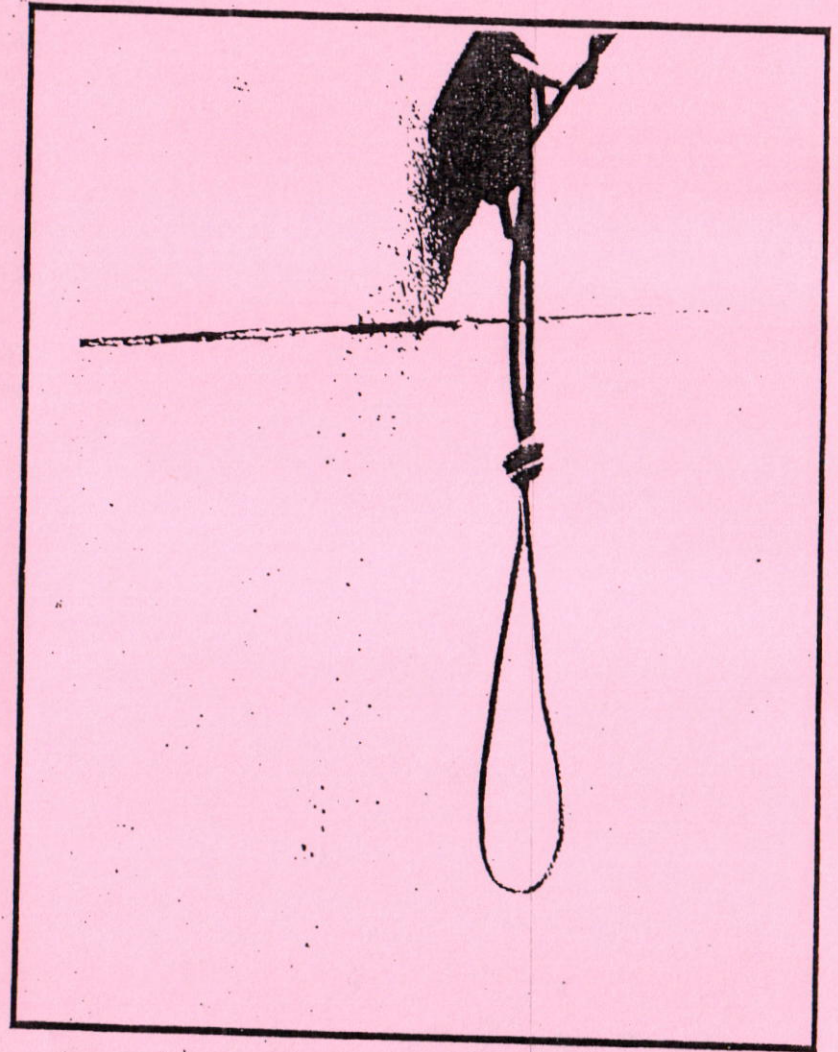
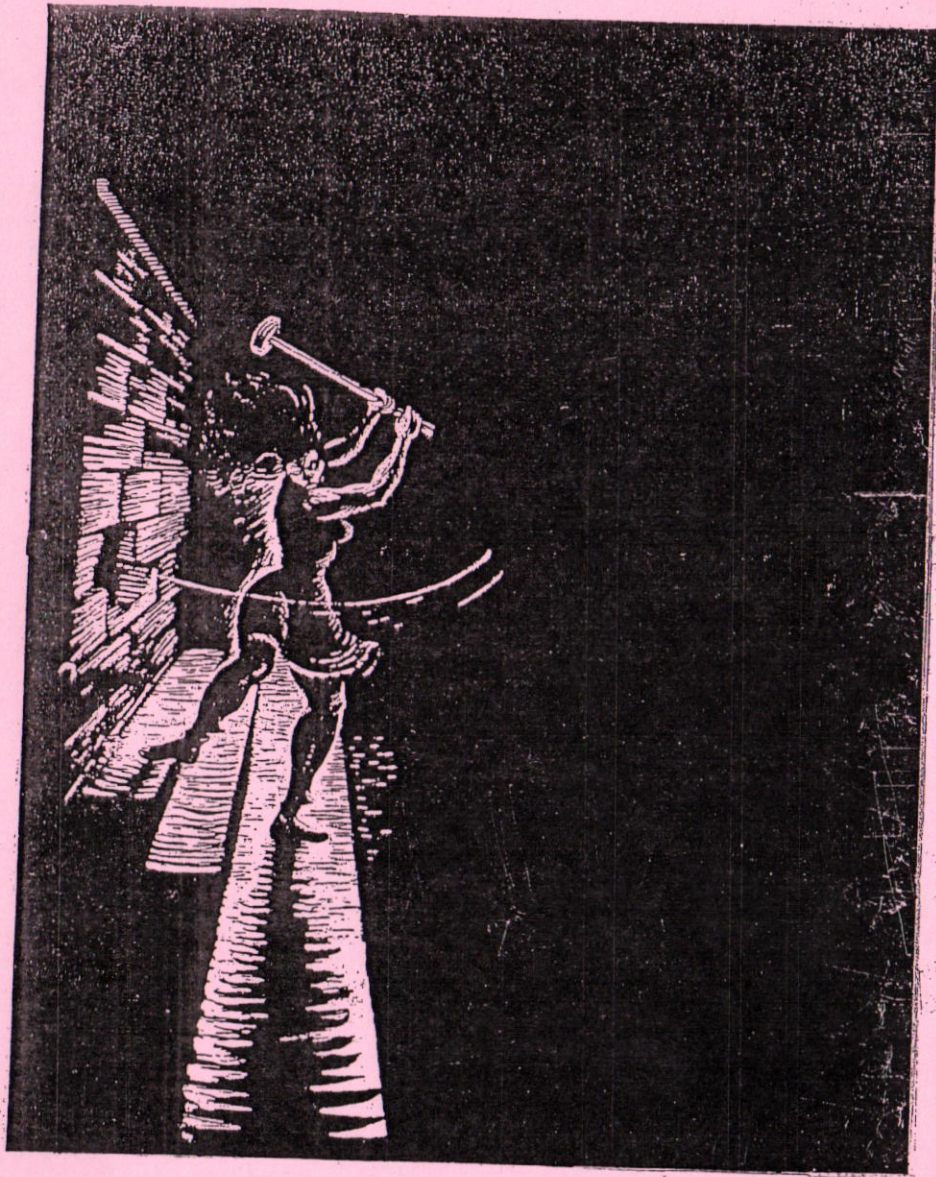


BLACK STAR NORTH #2



Saint Stephan 2000-- "in this sign shall you conquer"
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even in the quietest of moments. Even Mr. Rogers has a gun

We have not won any victories, because a victory would mean the state, its agencies, and the corporations (who dictate to the state their agendas) would be begging the people to talk. They would be begging to negotiate and seek a resolution to our prolonged and sustained action. They would be worried about not making any more money. They would be worried about the flames erupting all over the world in all their cities. They would be worried about their inventions of human destruction being set ablaze. They would be worried about us not paying them our hard earned money in the form of taxes. They would be worried that we have chosen to determine our own deaths and not allow our deaths to be determined by them.

-Ali Khalid Abdullah, *Fighting for A Better World*-
available through *Black Star North*.



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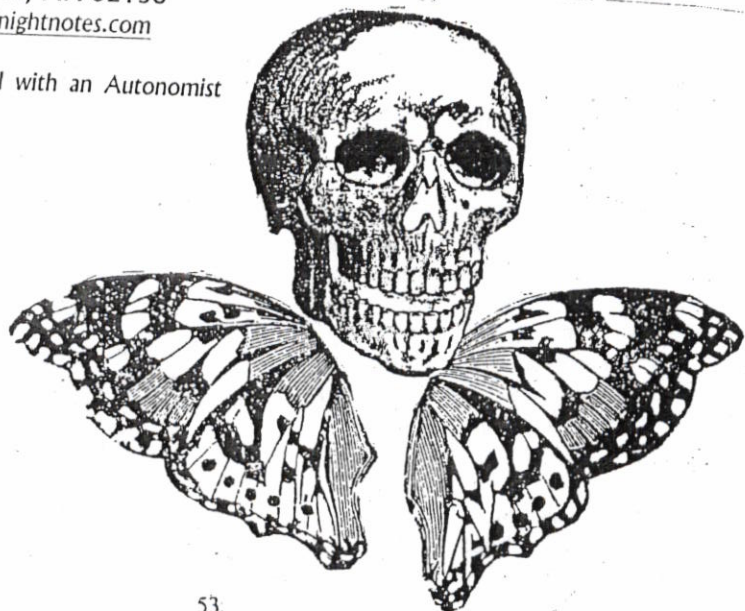
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website for the free West Papua
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They also have an informative web-site
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ARE WE SERIOUS?

From the outset, one of our desires in creating this zine was to present a strong editorial stance. Many radical fanzines are a collection of articles with no editorial policy, which often leads to the airing of seemingly random viewpoints. Lost is a unifying theme among the articles presented, and an analysis of the articles themselves (if not written by the editor[s]) and how they relate to one another. This is not, however, meant to discredit the endeavors of other zine editors. Most independent publications deserve recognition for the time, effort, and money put into them, as well as for the relevance certain articles contained within may hold to some readers. Our intent in doing this zine, however, is to contribute to the development of practical revolutionary theory.

Some may wonder from where the title "Black Star North" is derived. "Black Star North" is named after Red Star North, a leftist bookstore which existed in Portland during the early 1970s. Among those who ran Red Star North, was Ray Luc Levasseur, a political prisoner who today sits in jail for his involvement in various clandestine guerrilla actions.* We decided on the name "Black Star North" because we liked how it sounded.

Since publishing our first issue, the editors of the newspaper *Claustrophobia* (based in Baltimore) have expressed interest in writing an analysis of the recent Cincinnati riots for issue #3 of *Black Star North*. The *Claustrophobia* folks also publish books under the name *SexPol Editions*. They recently published the novel *The East Is Black* by Len Bracken; an excellent book descriptively detailing the tension between desire and ideology. It is highly recommended. They also plan to publish a book by anarchist prisoner, Shaka N'Zinga. Until then they have available in pamphlet form "a disjointed search for the will to live", one of the chapters from the forthcoming book.

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Anti-State Communism responsible for launching many of the debates (in the UK) surrounding the Anti-Globalization/Anti-Capitalist/Anarchist movement. Highly recommended for those involved in said respective movements.

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The ruling ideas of every epoch are
the ideas of the ruling class
-Karl Marx



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assessment of capitalism, its resistance,
and their own involvement in such
struggles. From an Anti-State
Communist Marxist perspective with
an incredible commitment to
theoretical rigor.

Claustrophobia / SexPol Editions may be reached through the
address listed in our "contacts" section.

We at *Black Star North* have also reprinted, in pamphlet
form, the essay "Fighting For A Better World, Fighting For A
Peaceful Life, Fighting To End All Forms Of Oppression" by
anarchist prisoner Ali Khalid Abdullah. Ali is correct when he
writes in this essay, "We have not won any victories." Despite
the many reforms "won" over the years by liberals and other
partisans of social democracy, the Earth today is in worse shape
than at any other point in history. Many are beginning to realize
that these reforms were in many cases nothing more than
capitalism's recuperation of actual revolutionary social
movements. In this way, capital and the state were able (and
continue to be able) to absorb its opposition while continuing its
death march of exploitation and control.

Confronted with the prospect of ecological meltdown and
the eclipse of humanity by the progress of computer technology
and genetic engineering, we are forced to ask ourselves--- are we
serious? Do we really want to destroy this society, or are we
content confined to the comfortable ghettos of anarchism and
activism? Do we want social revolution, or merely another
exclusive sub-culture? Do we want a world radically different
from the one we are forced to inhabit, or are we content with
slight changes to the character of this society? If we are serious
we must not shy away from forming a full analysis based in
knowledge of history, theory, and our own experiences. We
must apply this knowledge in our daily struggles against capital
and the state. Without a theoretical understanding, we are left
acting blindly, while simultaneously neglecting to analyze
(without rhetoric) the weaknesses and pitfalls of our current
revolutionary projects. This zine is one attempt to develop this
understanding. We look forward to your correspondence and
hope to establish a network of similarly minded individuals and
collectives.

*Ray may be contacted via Ray Luc Levasseur / #10376-016 / United States
Penitentiary / Box PMB / 601 McDonough BLVD., S.E. / Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Let's build quiet armies friends, let's march on their glass towers, let's build fallen cathedrals and make impractical plans... Interested parties should contact us at:

Black Star North
C/O Mutual Aid Portland
PO BOX 7328
Portland, ME 04112
blackstarnorth@yahoo.com



DEPRESSED, INSANE, AND EMOTIONALLY FUCKED UP

Coping with Today's Society

*The nature of insanity is open to debate.
The notion of insanity protects the state!*

-Red Monkey

There are a growing number of insane people these days. More and more people in industrial societies such as the one in which we live are committing suicide and abusing mind-altering drugs. More and more people are getting prescriptions for anti-depressant medications. More and more people are going on murderous shooting sprees in high schools, churches, offices, and fast-food restaurants. Why? Are these people just suffering from some sort of hormonal imbalance? Are they genetic deviants? Natural born fuck-ups? Or did their parents just raise them improperly? Why are more and more people depressed, insane, or otherwise emotionally fucked-up?

The excuses are lies. The widespread cynicism and emotional distress exhibited by the members of this society cannot be blamed on a genetic flaw. Geneticists hope to get rich some day by "curing" insanity

Life becomes inseparable from creational destruction detached from the endless exchange and production capital imposes. A life for realizing innermost desires nascent; creational destruction and destructional creation; of a sheer urge and longing for contact long severed by the imposition of the pseudo community of the workplace, buy/sell relationships, the imposition of computer screens, and the illusion of participatory "democracy".

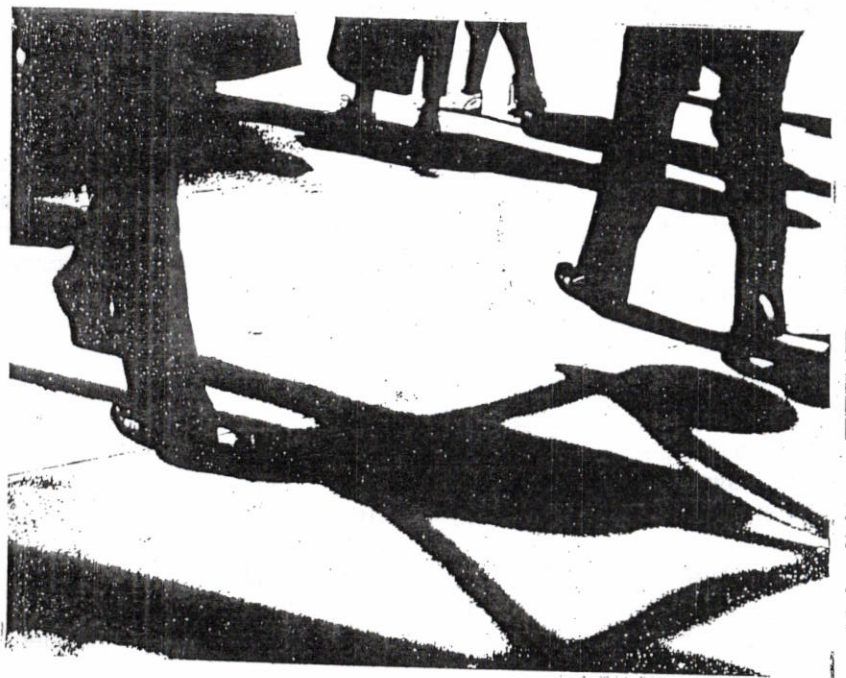
A life sanctified in a commitment to the utter ruins of that which exists and the creation of relations free of the reigns of capitalist inscribed value and manipulation.

Beauty exists, but only if we make it blossom and become an unstoppable tidal wave strong enough to flood the misery and impoverished existence engendered by the machinations of capital. Flying free from the wreckage, we recognize our repressed consciousness and become aware of self, world, and other. We create a new life out of the hollow shell of the old and actualize our dormant desires; long repressed by those seeking to crush and weigh down all that is a sincere manifestation of our true selves.

Free. Free. Free.



I must see something new and investigate it. I wish to taste dark water, cracking trees, to see wild air, to stare at rotting fences, how they all live, to hear young birch groves and quivering leaves, I want to see light and sun, to enjoy wet green evening vales, to sense the goldfish shining, to see white clouds forming. I want to talk to flowers. To look at the grass, rose- coloured people, old dignified churches, to hear small cathedrals speaking: then I will form beautiful coloured areas. -Egon Schiele



"sharks..... circling, circling..... while shopping...."

(social deviance) with Frankenstein-like genetic engineering technology. Psychologists and the author's of New Age self-help books make money convincing people that the victims are responsible for their own misery. "Focus on the good things in life," they say-- the positive aspects of your pathetic job and meaningless existence as a wage-slave. After all, you are still alive, right? Bullshit. The source of the mass of our suffering is external. Our misery grows from living in a divided, deeply alienating world-- a world of virtual reality and spiritual poverty-- where profits are more important than people and nature is disregarded-- where technological "progress" rolls on triumphantly, and any form of (real) community was demolished long ago.

People are in denial. They are too scared to acknowledge the true source of this society's rampant "insanity". Most people have been coerced and manipulated into a state of what anarchist political prisoner, Rob 'los Ricos' Thaxton*, calls "imposed imbecility". The institutions of the state and capital enforce this. Schools, prisons, work, the military, the police, social service programs, and the corporate mass media all contribute to this incredible brain-washing scheme. They *force* us to depend upon them. They tell us that the way we live today is the *best* way to live. They tell us that we have reached the pinnacle of human existence-- the height of civilization. They tell us that there is no alternative. We must obey. Those who refuse are insane.

But who is really insane? Those deemed so by the state? The "hyperactive" child who would rather play in the sun and grass than sit still in a desk all day listening to her stuffy teacher lecture about math and grammar? The "insubordinate" factory worker who despises his job on the assembly line, and longs to be appreciated as more than a mere appendage of a soul-less machine? No. The truly insane are those who conform to this sickening society without questioning its' deep-rooted oppression. Those who seek nothing more from life than the monotony of their daily routines. Those who have so deeply internalized the feelings of alienation inflicted upon them by this society, that they have come to accept these feelings as their own. Those who believe resistance to be futile, and even undesirable. The "hard worker", the "good student", the "rehabilitated criminal", the "model citizen": these are this society's true nutcases.





In reality, those often labeled "insane" or "depressed" are some of the only sane people left in this world. It makes sense that a growing number of people feel dissatisfied with school, or work, or with their lives in general. Freedom is being stolen from us. We may not understand it intellectually, but we can feel it. We feel lonely, incomplete, unfulfilled. Meaningful social relationships and interactions with the natural world are becoming extinct-- as the Prison Industrial Complex of the Soul extinguishes them. Sane people do not feel comfortable with this. They express their discontent in various subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Maybe some day the remaining sane people will decide to collectively rebel against and overthrow this insane social order. Maybe some day people live in a world where a deep sanity, rooted in a love of the Earth and humanity, will flourish wildly...

*Check out Rob's zine "Rob The Rich" available through *Green Anarchy*, in our contact section.

Disconnected from the real issues of existence, we distrust our instincts, sublimate our primal passion, control our lusts and bury them in diversionary amusements. We abdicate responsibility for our opinions and tranquilize ourselves with television. Silently we suffer a loss of intimacy. Feeling no sense of community we trust no ally. Having reduced love and death to a videotape spectator sport, we lose touch with our own mortality, yet fear the threat of sudden, random violence enough to sacrifice real liberty for perceived safety.

-Barret John Erickson

Declaration of the Surrealists on the Andy Warhol Retrospective at the Chicago Art Institute, June 1989

POINT-BLANK

Homage to Valerie Solanas

A hundred and eighty-one years ago William Blake warned us against certain artists who the ruling class "Hired to Depress Art." Today capital and its state monopolize Art itself while stifling all free expression. Contemporary society is one huge prison, and it comes as no surprise that the various celebrities of the Art Market are guards armed with stun-guns and tear-gas.

Avowedly racist and sexist, a devout Catholic, professional flatterer of corporate complacency, apologist for imperialism and every other form of exploitation and degradation, Andy Warhol exemplifies the sort of scum that rises to the top in this intolerably miserabilist society. The stinking corpse of this rich toady--the Richard Nixon of Modern Art, who boasted that his greatest ambition was to make himself a machine--remains the perfect embodiment of today's official culture.

Never having had the chance to spit in Warhol's face when he was alive, we take this opportunity to spit on his memory, on all his work, on all his admirers, and especially on all those curators, critics and other highly paid liars who have managed to convince a certain number of people that this putrid non-entity was and is actually of some importance.

Some day-- and sooner than you think! --we shall have the pleasure of trampling and pissing on Warhol's loathsome representation of commodities, on the ruins of this whole stinking social structure founded on the fetishism of commodities.

Meanwhile, if some of us take the trouble to show at these disgusting funerals of yours, the joke's still on you, isn't it? As Daffy Duck would say, "It is to laugh!"



The Surrealist Group

Chicago June 1989



THE WRITING ON THE WALL

crossing the street you are captured by the gaze of security cameras-the empty houses, boarded up, nobody allowed to use them-the street full of speeding cars-everywhere you go you got to pay in order to be there-the parks are trashed-huge warehouses, factories, schools all sorts of buildings rot a little more with each rain-you and me, we stuffed in tight row houses and when you look up on your way to the bus stop all's you can see is billboard ads.

in a huge world of possibility we are constantly confined by private property...

a thousand guarded walls keep us on the job, on the sidewalk, in front of the tv. a thousand clocks keep us in a planet-wide coordination of traffic flows, tv programming, leisure scheduling, and childhood processing. a thousand illusions, a thousand borders fence us off, fence us in. and if you refuse it, there's always a thousand cops to come after you.

roaming the streets, blowing-off life in a cell, hopping fences & walls, walking train lines, ducking cops, busting through boarded up doors & windows-talking back to industrial wasteland with stolen paint seeking out the forbidden view of this world-seize the abandoned, some room to really live-the city is too quiet & compliant, but someday it will be the land of the people uprisen.

graffiti is only a backward cast shadow of tomorrows' insurrection. graffiti is the first hints of a premonition of a sweet dream waking you up from a nightmare, and of a nightmare for those who can only live by dominating others cause everything will be lost to them. not just the walls anymore. we will take it all. graffiti is the writing on the wall.

-From Claustrophobia newspaper.



SPACE: ITS ENCLOSURE BY CAPITAL AND THE STATE

Marx made a thorough analysis of the production process as an exploitation of labor, but he made only cursory and reluctant comments about the prerequisite for capitalist production, about the initial capital that made the process possible. Without the initial capital, there could have been no investments, no production no great leap forward. This prerequisite was analyzed by the early Soviet Russian marxist Preobrazhensky, who borrowed several insights from the Polish marxist Rosa Luxemburg to formulate his theory of primitive accumulation. By primitive, Preobrazhensky meant the basement of the capitalist edifice, the foundation, the prerequisite. This prerequisite cannot emerge from the capitalist production process itself, if that process is not under way. It must, and does, come from outside the production process. It comes from the plundered colonies. It comes from the expropriated and exterminated populations of the colonies. In earlier days, when there were no overseas colonies, the first capital, the prerequisite for capitalist production, had been squeezed out of internal colonies, out of plundered peasants whose lands were enclosed and requisitioned, out of expelled Jews and Muslims whose possessions were expropriated.

The primitive or preliminary accumulation of capital is not something that happened once, in the distant past, and never after. It is something that continues to accompany the capitalist production process, and is integral part of it..... Without an ongoing primitive accumulation of capital, the production process would stop; each crisis would tend to become permanent.

-Fredy Perlman¹

Introduction

The spatial dimension to the current phase of capitalist globalization is not as easy to categorize as public physical space vs. private physical space. A small number of excellent essays have been written, particularly in



the publication *Killing King Abacus* as well as essays by the Midnight Notes Collective and in a less explicit way the writings of Jacques Camatte and Fredy Perlman, related to the varied elements capital and state utilize to expand accumulation and increase control. In other words, these essays and authors have examined in a multi-faceted way, the means which capital and state employ to physically enclose our bodies and social space, while also analyzing the way capital seeks to constrain our imagination, desires, and our very ability to interact.

This essay is dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of the transformation of space as a totality. Perhaps an essay on one of these elements would have sufficed, but we thought if examined from a totalizing perspective, it would help people to better understand the spatial dimension as an essential element of capital expansion. Additionally, I hope that people do their own research to allow a continually evolving and developing understanding of spatial enclosure. After all, capital is constantly re-establishing itself in different forms, while its content of course remains the same. Our understanding should be as updated as that of capital.

The Global North and Global South

...the fact is that the earth is becoming a space station and millions are already living in space-colony conditions: no oxygen to breathe, limited social /physical contact, a desexualized life, difficulty of communication, lack of sun and green.... even the voices of the migrating birds are missing.²

-Midnight Notes Collective

The little public and free space (including our minds, genes and biology), within the current phase of capital expansion and state control, is increasingly becoming transformed into a controlled space designed for the production, sale, and consumption of commodities. As capital assumes increased commodification and privatization of once semi-public and free space-- including that of our very being-- many of the poor and working class in the global north and global south are facing alienation and control in different ways. With the continued process of capital accumulation, however, many are coming to experience it in not such an easily differentiated way. Parts of Philadelphia, for instance, are literally living in conditions one would assign as third world squalor. For ease of analysis, we have attempted to assess in a generalized way, how different spatial regions around the world are experiencing the current phase of capitalist globalization.

Enclosure Then and Now

In his three-volume work, *Capital*, Marx wrote about the enclosures that occurred in parts of Europe during the transition from an agriculturally based, common land economy. He described the process thusly: "The spoliation of the church's property, the fraudulent alienation of the State domains, the robbery of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property, and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of reckless terrorism, were just so many idyllic methods of



graffiti artist becomes social in its reappropriation of private space.

Maine College of Art (MECA), darling of Portland, is concerned with molding its students to fit the function of art producers. Teaching students how to produce profitable art its function is to stifle the creative process in its focus upon producing for profit. This is not surprising seeing as how the school itself is attended by many spoiled upper class brats whose primary interest is making a living from the art products they produce. The function of MECA thus serves to keep art from actually escaping from the canvas-in other words actually ceasing to be and becoming real. Thus MECA like all institutions seeks to further the divide between product and process, artist and society, while what is necessary is an active supersession of all such categories. Creating, imagining, and making reality-through a refusal of our narrow role as artists in particular and roles in general- a reality so real that it tears and finally destroys the canvas of specialized "artists", and their "art".

In the face of such our project should consist of communication, theory, and action in utter defiance against this social order, which would assign paltry roles for us to live our lives through. This defiance should be collective when possible and individually through our own subversive thoughts, actions, and discussion. With continued interaction perhaps we can one day cease to define ourselves in terms of roles this social order assigns to us and instead revel, know, and explore each other as unique, differentiated human beings.

consignment to the gallery who in turn attempt to sell such works to wealthy consumers. Thus the circuit of capital is complete. In this way, it is facile to pass oneself off as hip and alternative as the creative process has been stunted in attempting to meet the standards set forth by the art-world in general and the gallery in particular. The "artist" in seeking to meet such standards is helping to maintain the role of specialist in creativity. The creativity in much modern art has been leached out due to commodification which makes such become solely commercial in quality. On the converse of this is the individual in revolt against the commodification of life in general and art in particular.

I recently in Issue No. 3 of "Diavolo in Corpo" read of French Surrealist Andre Breton and his comrade in 1930 laying waste to a new Parisian nightspot entitled "Bar Maldoror". The name is a reference to a book by seminal Surrealist Lautreamont, entitled Chants of Maldoror. The book itself is one of complete negation. It was (and is) classically known as a total refusal and a kick in the teeth to all the forces that would seek to restrain the individual. But I digress Breton and his comrade strongly detested the opening of "Bar Maldoror", which would have only been a means to profit off of his legacy. Knowing this they destroyed the bar without apology. The owner faced with such a show of wrath was forced to change the name of the business.

Relating it back to Portland, many have come to embrace this elitist category of artist. In doing so, they seek to separate themselves from the rest of society, while simultaneously creating an

insular "scene". A scene as opposed to an identified movement, with its intent to supercede codified social roles. The Surrealists, with all their shortcomings (internal purges etc.), attempted such an endeavor with a degree of success far beyond that of cliché art scenes.

In a less consciously political (anti-political) way in Portland (and across the country for that matter), graffiti-which calls into question private property and the role of artist- used to adorn many alleys and buildings. Unfortunately, much of it has been covered up and stale lifeless buildings remain. Though I am not a big fan of graffiti aesthetically, it shows a lot more guts, emotion, and bravado than that which exists in stale "art" galleries. The transformation of a once private building into that of a social space to free one's creativity subverts the logic of capital. This is a lot stronger than art merely being displayed within the confines of a private building. In this way, the process is both destructive (spray-painting a private building) and creative (freeing one's mind in the process) thus subverting the logic of enclosed and commodified art. The creative process of the



primitive accumulation. They conquered the field for capitalistic agriculture, made the soil part and parcel of capital, and created for the town industries the necessary supply for a "free" and outlawed proletariat.³ The late Marx, however, saw this process of enclosure as a necessary prerequisite for the "scientific" stage theory of history. In other words, he argued in his later writings, that in order for there to be a revolution the peasant needs to become a worker and the worker once developing the correct consciousness will inevitably overthrow capital and create a classless society.

Walter Benjamin spent a good part of his life researching, observing, and experiencing the history of capital and its violent, subtle, and covert means of transforming nature, man, and urban geography (and its human subjects). In his monumental book *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin devotes a large portion of this work to assessing the Haussmannization of architecture. This Haussmannization entailed the wholesale destruction of narrow streets, which was an attempt to halt the construction of barricades. Paris had seen insurrections in 1830 and 1848, all of which had seen people utilizing the narrow streets as a means by which to build barricades. When Haussmann came to power in 1853 he completed the process of enclosing narrow streets by building boulevards, which while making it increasingly difficult to build barricades, also furthered the atomization of the working class by destroying the neighborhoods and enclaves frequented by poor and the working class people. This process of enclosure was one of intense dislocation, which ripples down to the enclosures occurring in the global south.

The Global South

The current phase of capitalist expansion is marked by a similar propensity towards the forced expulsion off of common lands in the South. With this forced expulsion comes a migration to the city to be met with forced proletarianization. In this context, many attempt to flee such immiseration, only to be met with the brute force of the border patrol.

As the movement of capital is deregulated it becomes virtually impossible to flee the impoverishment wrought by capitalist institutions and corporations. Tighter borders, thus serve as key ingredient in the restricted movement of the poor. In this sense "...as capital moves ever more freely around the world: we are locked up, confined, enclosed."⁴ Capital can move

immiserated, while the poor and working class are restricted from free movement.

More generally, this attack against the poor is part of the always-continuing process of capital accumulation. Thus, the poor and working class are continually exploited, while capital can continue its plunder.

The Global North

Thus as anonymous victims of the rising organic composition of capital, they find themselves unemployed (often for the young this means there is no possibility for them to enter the global productive process), they feel no compulsion to organize against a specific antagonist. The enemy which has victimized them is not any capitalist in particular but capitalist society as whole which they perceive more or less confusedly.

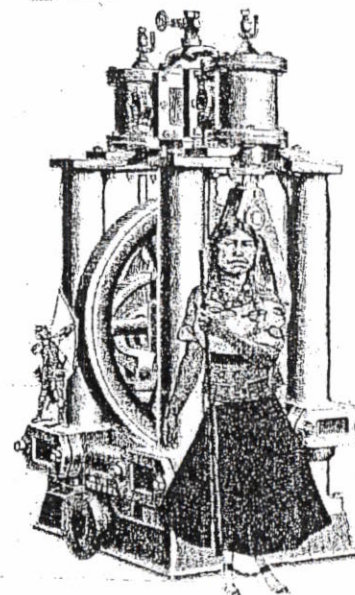
-Negation, No. 3⁵

The necessity of capital to retool does not mean it leaves the region from which it physically exploited. As Fredy Perlman pointed out in the above passage the process of capital accumulation continues today. Of course, the physical enclosure of the earth and its inhabitants continues in the North, but with little space left to exploit capital has set out to enclose and commodify the inner recesses of our bodies, minds and the natural world.

Thus, our bodies and the natural world become the testing grounds for genetic engineering, cloning, and various forms of biological manipulation. In this way, capitalist technology has moved from pesticides to genetic engineering. The actual composition of the innards of the plant have been engineered with isolated genes from other plants and even animals, to allow its outer physical structure to endure excessive dousing of chemicals--thus being manufactured into fully engineered plant where its characteristics as a differentiated plant are erased.

"Today all urban space is watched, controlled, patrolled, feared, distrusted, perpetually threatened. In the name of security, it has gradually reached the point of the creation of an absolute technological-military prison. One can say that this long war will cease in order to abandon its place to a kind of monstrous prison is an extreme form of 'necessary' protection. And this is happening under a democracy that tries to appear powerless, under the egalitarian rhetoric with which it cloaks itself, to prevent- since this is what it wants and needs in order to conserve itself - every city of its dreams from becoming a maximum security prison space (thus without respite), where the circulation of individuals resembles the circling of the prisoners round and round that courtyard with the high windowless walls where the poor exhausted footsteps resound in cadence."⁶

Similarly, the means utilized lately by the state to control its subjects here in the North (and the South in a similar way) are felt through physical means, however, its means have become more subtle and ominous. Surveillance-- in designated semi-public and private spaces, monitoring devices for ex-prison inmates on parole, retina scanning, iris scanning, computerized biometrics-- are all utilized as identification systems to keep "criminals" locked into the prison structure. As *Killing King Abacus* states in



THE ART QUESTION

"We had a dim premonition that power-mad gangsters would one day use art itself as a way of deadening men's minds" -Hans Arp

Having lived in Portland, Maine on and off for the last year I have observed and experienced the elitism and commodification of "artists" and "artwork". Portland being something of a renowned "art" enclave is generally known for Maine College of Art assorted galleries and general "hipness" has become a place of refuge for some of the most stale, barren, and unimaginative "artists" and "artwork". Outside of this context there are some artists and artwork, who and which manage to transcend the mundane art existing here in Portland.

There are many art galleries here in Portland. Without comprehensively analyzing the role of the art gallery in maintaining the social edifice, I will attempt to sketch a rough picture of its role. The role of the art gallery serves in seeking to commodify art so the process of creation is turned into product. In other words, art as a creative and affirmative act has become a mere relic one hangs on the wall without a connection to lived everyday experience and observation. The artist fails to supercede art by neglecting to make the imaginative real.

Under the present social order one is expected to pay a price for everything that exists. The art gallery serves this function quite well in its continual accumulation of works of "art". The piece is given on

Flipping through the pages of *Northeastern Anarchist* and other NEFAC literature, we found it difficult to figure out exactly what it is NEFAC stands for. Such publications seem to consist (as can be seen in the quote in the second paragraph of this essay) of rhetoric and played-out revolutionary clichés, with little content or actual critical analysis. NEFAC also tends to embrace the revolutionary theory of Peter Kropotkin and other anarchists from the late 1800s- early 1900s. While some of these writings maintain their relevance, they need to be updated to address the vast changes inflicted upon society by capitalism, industry, and the state over the past 100 years. By failing to do so, NEFAC remains clinging to the antiquated ideals of a bygone past.

Among NEFAC, several collectives are assigned roles such as "General Secretariat- English," "General Secretariat- Francophone," and "International Secretariat." We are bewildered as to what practical purpose these groups serve. They seem to create an unnecessary division of labor and a possible tendency towards hierarchies. It appears to us that the primary activities of NEFAC are concerned with perpetuating its federation, rather than encouraging and participating in actual autonomist class struggle.

Having said that we do not seek rivalry with NEFAC, we nonetheless encourage correspondence and reciprocation with groups and individuals interested in ideas similar to those presented in this publication. Thus we aren't proposing the establishment of another federation, but a series of relations and informal networks. We look forward to hearing from others and hope that this essay will encourage critical thought within the federation.



Everything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and incommunicable, high and low, ceased to be perceived as contradictions.

-Andre Breton



their article entitled "Fixed Abodes": "This leads us towards a world which according to the system, the most valuable thing about the human body is the digital data which is provides."⁷ This illustrates the means which the state utilizes to continue its domination. In this way, capital needs the state to continue its process of accumulation.

Conquering The Space Of Our Imagination

In a like vein, our very personalities, tastes, desires, and emotions are being commodified to fit the impersonality of capital. Jacques Camatte assessed this phenomenon as capital penetrating "....thought, consciousness, and thus destroying human beings such as they have been produced by centuries of class society. Their loss of substance is the loss of their former being, which capital has pumped out of them..... it must now conquer imagination."⁸ In other words, capital having achieved almost complete domination over our physical body and social space has sought to conquer our imagination.

The space of our imagination becomes a cesspool of mass produced images, commodities too expensive to purchase, a life and imagination we can buy through cinema, television and so forth. Similarly, the jobs offered to us are largely in the service sector where we are forced to appear (in dress and appearance) as the role of actor. We are forced to wear a smile as our job is to serve "our" customers. A uniform is part of the actor apparel as well. Our uniformity of dress accords with the uniformity of our acted personalities. Just as many of the commodities for sale on the market are largely disposable junk, so to is the service industry worker. Most service industry jobs are employment at will where the corporation can dispose of the worker as one would dispose of worthless commodities.

Resistance To The New Spatial Reorganization of Capital

With the growth of the Anti-Globalization movement- a movement of many different ideas, tactics, and visions of which anarchists and anti-capitalists play a small, but strong part in- there has been a heightened awareness of the effects related to the current moment in capital and state restructuring. This movement is international in scope, while many, however, fail to see the connection between the north and south. This essay has attempted to link these spatial regions together, by illustrating the means by which the state will continue its domination and capital will continue its plunder.

The recent string of protests against finance capital, such as those against the WTO, IMF, World Bank, and the FTAA signify people are willing to fight capitalism (or for some simply globalization.). Though not without their share of problems, the protests surrounding these meetings have proven there is a fertile terrain on which to fight. However, with the focus

upon financial meetings occurring on specific days this can lead to one merely attending these protests, while neglecting to realize that financial capital is merely one of the strong ways in which today's phase of capital manifests itself. The other means by which capital manifests itself have been taken on in this essay, but others of course exist as well. Gentrification, on the job control and manipulation, homelessness, and so on are all further manifestations of capital colluding with the state in different ways to keep the always continuing process of capital accumulation barreling forth.

As for more regional resistance many examples exist. The Free West Papua movement against the enclosure of their land and their very livelihood, and the South Korean autoworkers fighting militantly against capital and state are two current examples. A few years ago the Mission Yuppie Eradication Project in San Francisco was active in trying to create a movement against rising rents and increased gentrification. The campaign against genetically modified organisms in food in the UK laid the ground for subsequent resistance against GMO's here in the US (particularly in the form of sabotage). The list goes on.

A few years ago here in Portland, the struggle for space took the form amongst a group of mostly street kids known as "the undesirables". Catering to businesses and tourists, the cops attempted to forbid young people from hanging out on Exchange Street during the busy summer tourist season. Exchange Street is the tourist shopping district of an increasingly gentrified Portland. The focus of this group consisted of drawing attention to the lack of social space available for young people to meet and interact- as well as making a degree of inconvenience for businesses and cops. The group has since disbanded due to certain tactics utilized by some participants- some making themselves self-appointed spokespersons for this largely self-defined group. Unfortunately, the potential of such has yet to be fully realized.

Control Of Capital By The State

Within the broad movement against globalized capital, many have come to embrace the state as means by which to control the movement of capital in general, and its corporations and its financial institutions in particular. This faulty logic has lead many to petition the state "demanding" laws restricting the movement of capital across borders. If such a law ever went into effect it could only lead to increased control of the poor and workers. Capital, working hand in hand with the state, would make sure that such a law would work to the advantage of business, and finance, and to the detriment of the poor and the working class. Historically, the role of the state is not one of friend. As witnessed in the self-avowed communist countries of the former USSR, the state in its acquisition of the means of production will use land, labor, and capital in a similar manner private capital makes use of it. The USSR was a state capitalist regime where the means of production were controlled by the state, while the population was forcibly subservient to the elitist party bureaucracy. It is unfortunate some anarchists have fallen into the trap of declaring that the professed "rights" of nation-states have



NEFAC, as defined by *Northeastern Anarchist: The Magazine of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists* (see 'contacts' section of this zine), is an "organization of revolutionaries from the northeastern region of North America who identify with the communist tradition within anarchism. The federation is organized around the principles of theoretical coherence, tactical unity, collective responsibility, and federalism, and our activities include study and theoretical development, anarchist agitation and propaganda, and intervention within the class struggle." This consists of a theoretically non-hierarchical federation of collectives from throughout the Northeast who agree to adhere to a set of rules and principles outlined in the NEFAC constitution. According to their web-page, a collective interested in joining NEFAC must "send a letter of written request of adherence to the coordinating committee." This step is followed by a series of bureaucratic and administrative procedures: voting, review, further correspondence, etc.

In researching this critique, we found the NEFAC organization to be even more bureaucratic, confusing, and seemingly incoherent than we originally expected. Reading through their federation's policies was almost as interesting as filing our yearly federal tax forms.

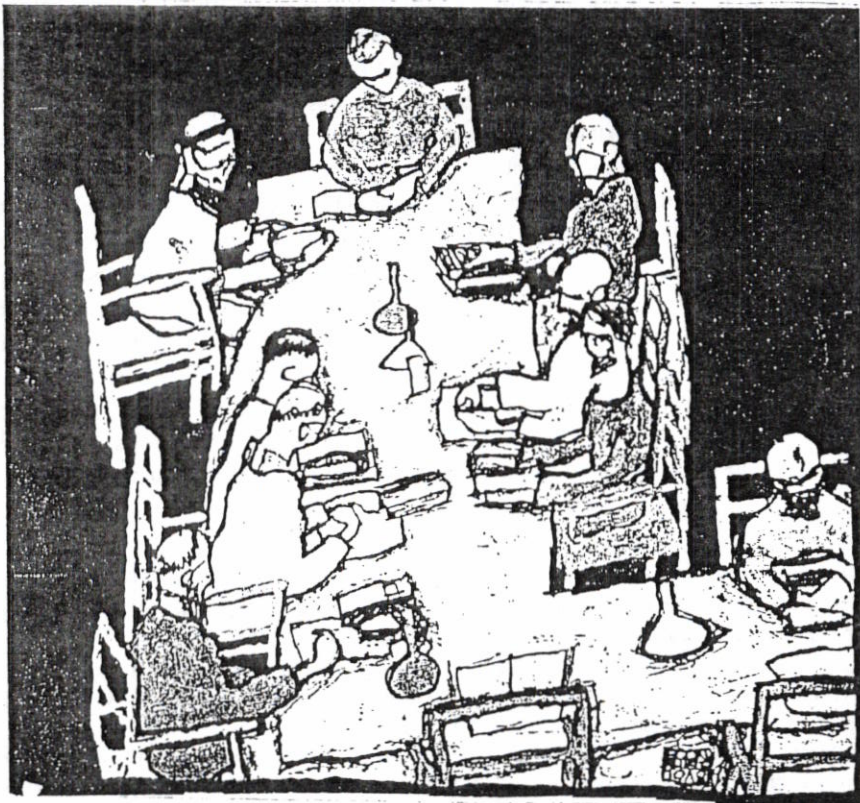
Our primary critique of NEFAC is their highly bureaucratic structure. We think anarchist organizations should be reflective of the society they are striving to actualize. Having grown up amidst the alienation of an already bureaucratic and impersonal society, we have no interest in maintaining bureaucratic structures once this society is destroyed. Therefore we find NEFAC's insistence on the use of heavily bureaucratic organizational models to be incompatible with the society we wish to create.

NEFAC's organizational structure rests on an adherence to the ideology of "anarcho-communism." Without going into great detail (for such a topic could be the subject of a whole other essay) we wish to provide a brief critique of this ideology as it is presented by NEFAC.

(8) Although to talk about 'pacifism as pathology' really misses the point (see Do or Die #8, review of 'Pacifism as Pathology'). In fact, the proposed remedies for this are as 'pathological' as the 'disease' it aims to 'cure'.

(9) The problem is not the 'undemocratic' nature of the Direct Action Network. If the majority of people abided to these rules, this meant that there was already an agreement as to their content. To claim that it was these 'rules and guidelines' which prevented people from using violence is obviously wrong.

(10) It was both funny and extremely sad to see the way in which 50-60 'anti-authoritarian' anarchists spent one hour of the mini-conference in order to exclude the one member of the (trotskyists) workers' party, a process which was justified later on with the claim that 'we don't want to be shot like partridges'. Obviously, according to the anarchists, that was a likely possibility of Mayday...



Why We're Not Members of NEFAC Some thoughts on Anarchist Organization

We would like to start this out by emphasizing that we have no desire to seek rivalry with the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC). In fact, we sympathize with the intentions of many of its members. As anarchists, we share two fundamental aims: the abolition of capitalism and the state. Such agreement on certain principles, however, does not render anarchist ideologies and organizations (such as NEFAC) immune to critique.

been dissolved, thus meaning the state itself must intervene to protect its sovereignty. The state needs to be destroyed along with capital and the social relations it produces.

Closing Remarks

The questions of space, physical enclosure and internalized enclosure, are historical and present day sights of contention. We only hope these sights of enclosure will be continually contested by the poor and the working class. As demonstrated, resistance to such enclosure is as international as capital and the state. Through continued interaction internationally our links can become stronger than the superficial links tying capital together. Perhaps such a linkage will lead to an insurrection that seeks to destroy with ferocity and passion the reigning socio-economic order. Such a rupture necessitates a total leveling of this utterly malignant system of control and alienation. At this point of rupture, the space of our bodies, minds, and physical social world will finally be free to fully explore the wondrous lush fields of our imagination.

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² Midnight Oil: Work, Energy, War, 1973-1992, p. 323.

³ Capital Volume 1, p. 685.

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Tribal War NOT National Liberation

' "Flag raisings" and "independence movements" have become burning songs lately in West Papua. Then people might ask, "Do they want a nation state called West Papua?" The answer is of course "Nein!" We instead want to be left alone as we have been and as we are. It does not matter if we are regarded as primitives. The struggle to free West Papua is not to take away one government and then replace it with a new government. We do not want to administer ourselves the capitalists "profit-making". It is a struggle between modern society and tribal people. It is a struggle between an ecologically harmonious life and an environmentally exploitative one.'

- From OPM/TPN Communique 1/12/99

As eco-anarchists we in OPM SG (Brighton) do not support 'national liberation' struggles. This is not ideological nit-picking. Most of the population of this earth live in countries 'liberated' by the struggles of the anti-colonial wave. Millions of courageous workers and peasants sacrificed themselves for their 'nation's liberation'. Mostly all that was gained was the freedom to be oppressed and exploited by an emerging native managerial class. "National liberation" builds nation states while obscuring pre-existing and emerging class antagonisms with the ideology of nationalism. Indonesia itself was forged in the heat of a guerilla war of national liberation against the Dutch and Japanese.

Often radicals in western countries project onto a 3rd world movement an image that is largely a reflection of their own ideologies not the aspirations of the movement itself. For understandable reasons of survival and diplomacy many 3rd world organisations help this situation by either saying different things to different groups or remaining vague enough to be all things to all people. Is this the case with West Papua?

Papua's mountains and jungles have shaped one of the most diverse people on earth. The million or so West Papuans constitute less than 0.1% of the world's population but account for up to 25% of all known languages. Some tribes live far from civilisation (literally meaning the culture of cities) carving out a subsistence lifestyle. Others live in or near the Indonesian created towns and roads and have seen their land destroyed by mining, logging, and oil exploration. In some places missionaries have made Papuans reject their culture and traditional (un)dress while in others the godbotherers still get attacked if they try to spread the 'good news'.

Part of the 'anti-globalisation' ideology of the direct action movement is the focus on its consequences on the 'underdeveloped' countries, an effect of which is the fuelling of uncritical support for liberation movements in the third world, a practice reminiscent of leninist babble. The struggle of the Zapatistas in Mexico, the landless peasants in Brazil, maoist guerrillas in Tibet etc., all have received enthusiastic and uncritical support, justified through the argument that 'we', as westerners, who live in the 'political comfort zone', cannot possibly criticise the struggles of people whose experiences and struggle we cannot 'understand', being as they are, so far beyond our 'zone'. But, these struggles are relevant to us only to the extent that we can learn from them and relate them to our struggles. Finding a minimum common denominator between the various struggles in various parts around the world, the direct action scene ignores the content of these movements, and attempts to create a spectacle of unity. The fact, for example, that the Zapatistas are speaking about national unity or civil society, or that the maoist guerrillas are (simply) maoist, is obviously irrelevant for the direct action militants. Instead, the focus is on the spectacular elements of these struggles (people in balaclavas and guns in proper guerrilla fashion). Any radical critique of their content is redundant.

The separation between developed and underdeveloped countries, between 'political comfort zones' and third world national liberation struggles with immunity to radical critique because of their 'revolutionary' spectacle, is by far the biggest pile of shit to come out of the direct action scene. Bizarrely, twenty years ago, revolutionaries would not have the slightest hesitation in discrediting any such bollocks as leninist. Today though, everything is justified if it fits the recipe: sexy, inspiring or exotic.

In the midst of enthusiasm and grandeur, the direct action movement sees a growing anti-capitalist movement everywhere. This illusion stops them from recognizing that, in its present form, the direct action movement is going nowhere.

(1) It seems to be the case that the 'battle' of Seattle was predominantly characterised by extreme police brutality and by peace-types violently (!) protecting property rather than destruction of property and attacks against the cops. Hardly what we would call a 'battle'.

(2) Like gardening in a graveyard: there are some flowers, but rooted in death and decay.

(3) A more general analysis/critique of the anti-roads movement can be found in Aufheben, #3, 1994, 'Can We Slay the Roads Monster?'.

(4) Recent developments in the direct action scene indicate a neglect of its most important elements: rather than a genuine attempt to understand and move forward from J18 and Euston (N30), the tendency is one of a return to a green agenda (guerrilla gardening) and an anarchist conference.

(5) An example of that is rightfully pointed out in Do or Die, #8, 'War is the health of the State: An Open Letter to the Direct Action Movement'.

(6) Most activists, for example, refuse to take part in struggles against the unemployed benefit cuts, although most of them are unemployed themselves. These struggles are not, obviously, as 'sexy and inspiring' as occupying the offices of Shell for an afternoon or dressing up like a turtle downtown Seattle.

(7) The SI provided a very concise critique of this counter-revolutionary tendency. For more recent attacks on the militant role see the useful, yet somewhat hesitant, critique in Reflections on June 18th, 'Give up activism'.

attempt to expose the leftists' counter-revolutionary function. It is surprising to see how anarchists consider it as an integral part of their identity to constantly attack trotskysts, something which is done by simply pointing at the hierarchical structure of their party accompanied by a necessary denunciation of any sort of authority. Yet, even this critique would be useful, if only they directed it against the direct action movement itself, whose structure, although more fluid, also includes hierarchical tendencies.

Similar to the leninist conception of the vanguard party which they so much despise, the direct action scene shares many of its characteristics. The notion that 'normal people' only need to get in touch with their ideas in order to become revolutionaries, the educational tone of their public outreaches ("a festival of anarchist ideas" or "a spoof newspaper...explaining anarchy"), the idea in general that revolution will only occur when 'normal people' come in contact and get influenced by the 'revolutionary consciousness' that the direct action scene is so full of. At the same time, leftist parties are slagged off in every chance because of their 'vanguard-ism'.



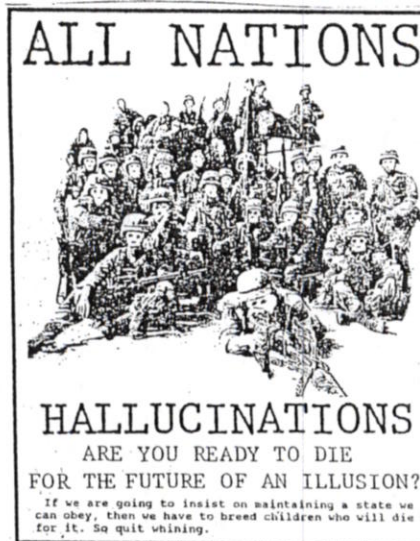
In terms of organisation, although the claim is that the direct action scene consists of 'autonomous' and non-hierarchical structures, the underlying agreement is that things like June 18th or Seattle could never have happened unless they were properly organised. Regardless of the non-hierarchical rhetoric, this fact exposes once again the separation between the 'professional activists' and the 'normal people'. In this way, the 'non-hierarchical' Direct Action Network behind the events of Seattle was able to impose a set of rules and guidelines (9) for those who wanted to take part in the 'anti-capitalist' actions prepared for the WTO conference -to which most objections concerned the actual content of the principles without challenging the notion of principles as such-, while the 'anti-authoritarian' anarchists behind the Mayday preparations have also adopted similar 'principles' and rules in order to exclude the hierarchical trotskysts (10). The illusion that hierarchy can be abolished through the drawing out of 'anti-hierarchical' principles, shows that they (as much as the direct action movement) have an ideological conception of hierarchy, failing to see it as a problem to be overcome by the development of our struggle.

It would be ridiculous to claim that all Papuans have the same ideas about their struggle. In fact some do not know that the struggle, the OPM or Indonesia even exist. Those Papuans who know 'Indonesia' has declared war on their race and their ecology could not for a moment envision Jakarta, the New York Stock Exchange or the matrix of global industrialism. Some of the baggage of 20th century 'revolutionary nationalism' has reached the OPM - flag raisings, pompous sounding military titles, in the past even a minute amount of Marxism. On the whole however the OPM has more in common with American Indian resistance in the wild west than Leninist guerillas in Kurdistan.

There is always a danger that the struggle against Leviathan turns people of the resistance into monsters themselves. Is there a state waiting to be born within the OPM? It is possible but we think unlikely. There are many factors playing against the OPM ending up as 'national liberationists'. The scattered OPM guerrillas have a number of leaders but no central command. They love the land and dislike cities. They demand an end to logging and mining, not just a share of the profits. No other nation states of any meaningful size support the West Papuans- if they get aid at all it will be from either Pacific indigenous groups or anarchist/ecological networks. The diversity of their tribal cultures and the geography of their land both negate state creation. They defend the traditional and largely reject the modern. Their prime demand remains- 'Leave Us Alone!'

However it is not inconceivable that a native managerial elite could be constructed from Papuans in exile, some within the OPM and members of the Papuan Presidium Council. Anarchist orientated elements in the OPM have been guarding against this possibility both in word and deed. The OPM is at root a tribal war of stateless peoples, anarchist peoples, against the destruction of their land by the global industrial machine. As long as that remains so it is our responsibility as radicals in the heart of the empire that attacks them to aid them in whatever way we can.

- OPM Support Group (Brighton, U.K.)



Revolution or Death

What we can learn from the Free West Papua Movement

"The tribal warrior cultures of the native Papuans would rather die fighting than live another minute under the brutal, destructive and genocidal Indonesian regime. I have to say I agree with them."

- Friends of People Close to Nature activist in West Papua

Armed with spears and long-bows, the indigenous warriors of West Papua continue to fight the technologically advanced Indonesian military. To the majority of West Papuans, armed struggle, despite severe tactical disadvantage, is the only honorable and reasonable form of resistance available to combat the onslaught of a capitalist state that surely seeks to annihilate their communal tribal societies and the rich jungle ecosystems in which they are so deeply embedded. The NGO-backed Papuan Presidium Counsel (PPG), meanwhile, attempts to negotiate with the Indonesian state on behalf of the West Papuan people, but compromises on partial reforms in state policy-- thus allowing the profit hungry mining, logging, and oil companies to continue their conquest of the West Papuan land and people, only in less visible and direct ways. Most West Papuans, however, recognize the PPG as the manipulators they are, and remain steadfast in their demands to be left alone. It seems that to these traditional people, armed struggle to the death is more desirable than the abandonment of a communal way of life for work in the factories, mine shafts, and logging camps of the multi-national corporations.

Meanwhile in the West, most people (including anarchists) have never even heard of the Free West Papua Movement. Many people who have heard of it regard it as something distant and novel-- relegated to the remote mountain jungles of a far-off Pacific island-- with little or no relevance to our own lives and anti-capitalist struggles in the industrialized world. But is the West Papuan struggle really that different than our own freedom struggles? A knowledgeable person would answer no. There is much we can learn from the defiant natives of West Papua.

West Papua's native people are diverse (Papua is home to 25% of the world's known languages), and like all people they are affected by cultural changes that have doubtlessly occurred throughout their various histories. A notable characteristic of most West Papuans, however, is a strong communal spirit and an ecologically sustainable way of life rooted in a love for the earth (which they do not view as being separate from themselves, as most Westerners do). These traits seem to have existed for as long as can be recalled by the oral histories that have been passed down through countless generations of elders. As such, the West Papuans are living proof that people can live healthy and fulfilling lives without the institutionalized coercion of capitalism and the state.

The people of West Papua, despite cultural differences, are really not that different from ourselves. They are human beings who care about their families and loved-ones and for the most part, would like to be left alone to live their lives without being ordered

important finance capital or the IMF is, a partial attack on capital can only have partial results. And half-made 'revolutions' only dig their own grave.

Failing to identify any 'sexy and inspiring' situations outside its own, the direct action movement stands in the fringes of social antagonisms. Most of its preoccupations do not arise out of immediate social conditions, but are in many cases the result of essentially moral considerations which accompany a specific lifestyle. We thus have the bizarre spectacle of direct action activists choosing which struggles to take part in, a remnant of the direct action's background as a super market of single issues. The refusal to take part in struggles which do not fit the common denominator of 'sexy and inspiring' by some people simply shows that in fact they do live in a 'political comfort zone' (at least in their minds) in which we have the luxury to decide which part of the totality we will attack, usually a different one every day.

What used to be only a potential danger of creating a separate 'class of revolutionaries', with a specialised position in subversive struggles, is now a reality for the direct action movement. The militant role is the dominant spectacle of the direct action movement and it is aware of it. The role of the militant has been properly discredited elsewhere (7) so it is of no point to get into it again. It is interesting however to see the development of the radical part of the direct action scene towards a bizarre fetishism of violence. Although it is right to attack the pacifist elements and to expose their reformism (8), this has resulted in a glorification of violence which seems detached from the social reality that gives rise to it. "The materialist conception of violence excludes any principled position, either in favour of these methods or against them. It does not revert the principles of the bourgeois society in order to transform [violence] into an absolute good, nor does it condemn it as an absolute bad." (Barrot)

The more capital tries to complete its domination upon our lives, the more is our need for a community intensified. This is reflected in every struggle against capital, which is, most importantly, our attempt to connect with other people and to transcend the isolation imposed to us. Yet, the danger of creating a pseudo-community is obvious. In line with the uncritical adoption of the militant role, the direct action movement has tried to fight against isolation by creating a pseudo-community of activists, separate from the rest of 'normal people', one which possesses a clear revolutionary consciousness that people are simply waiting to learn. Like a petty-bourgeois family, the direct action movement sees itself as the centre of the world, and conceives itself as the community, seeking to recreate itself as such in every opportunity. This illusory community is strongly sustained through constant self-reassuring 'sessions', in which the supremacy of the direct action scene is skillfully demonstrated. This is usually done in comparison to the 'boring lefties', to which the direct action movement stands opposed to as the enlightened militants. Obviously the lefties are boring and their ideas of action are neither imaginative nor inspiring, but that's not the real problem. This opposition fails to expose them as what they really are, i.e. capitalist organisations. Instead, the well-intentioned critique is misplaced and ends up implying that the main problem of the lefties is their lack of imagination! It becomes obvious that this 'critique' of leftist organisation is more directed towards the re-affirmation of direct action activists as the proper revolutionaries rather as an

The tendency is there, especially at non-revolutionary times, to applaud the emergence of any violent confrontations between proletarians and the state. And to a certain degree it is justified, for it is for many of us an escape from a routinely organised life which offers nothing at all. It carries however the danger of fetishising incomplete expressions of our struggle and thus perpetuating their existence as incomplete. To organise 'days against capitalism', even if that in itself marks an important step forward from the super market of single issues that most of the direct action movement is involved in, is nothing but an expression of our inability to attack capital in its root in a systematic way. Capital is a social relation, and hence our struggle against it is either centred on our everyday life or it is nothing. The only use of 'days against capitalism' is that it provides a chance for many of us to meet outside of boring political frameworks and to collectively express our disgust at the existing world (4). But that's about it. However positive that may be, it does not in itself point towards the emergence of a 'global anti-capitalist movement'.

The movement around events such as J18 and Seattle is largely disconnected from existing struggles against capital's offensive against us (5). However much the direct action scene has picked up the term 'anti-capitalism', and however that may in some ways be an advance, it is common place that capitalism is essentially a system of production. None of the 'sexy and inspiring' actions that took place under the banner of 'anti-capitalism' were in the slightest focused on the production process. Instead, the focus was on finance capital, international monetary institutions and the illusory opposition between 'free trade' and 'fair trade'. The 'targets' that the direct action scene has chosen thus far represent capital's mechanisms for the regulation of decisions already made in the production process.

We are not, as we have pointed out before, fetishising the factory. Production is not only taking place in the factories. But 'anti-capitalism' is not an idea that people pick up on, but a tendency, a movement, arising out of our social conditions (the first of which is our relation to work) aiming at destroying capital in its totality. However



around by business people, politicians, and men with guns. But unlike the West Papuans, we in the Western world (in most cases) have come to accept the state, the military, capitalism, industry, and wage-slavery as inevitabilities. The history books issued to us in government and religious schools have taught us to forget that all of us (regardless of ethnic background) are descendents of people who where once indigenous to some place at some point in history. And many of our ancestors fought their conquerors with the

same ferocity and determination as the West Papuans. We are all kin to tribal people who fought the armies of the first empires and civilizations; of peasants who resisted the violent enclosures of their land; of slaves who defied their masters; of independent rural folk who refused industrialization; or of early industrial workers who revolted against their horrid conditions, demanding an end to poverty, hunger, and exploitation.

Today, however, our subservience has become internalized. The success of any empire depends upon its ability to convince its subjects that life under the empire is better and superior to any other life. And no empire has succeeded more in doing this than the current global, techno-capitalist regime, which seems intent on colonizing every last corner of this planet.

To maintain its rule and continue its expansion, the current order depends upon a vast employment of propaganda-- mass media, advertisements, church, school-- which nearly monopolize our access to information. A daily process of ideological reinforcement forces us to personally reproduce the logic of capitalism, as we are purposely left without knowledge or hope that a possibility of alternatives may exist. In this atmosphere, even resistance tends to be tainted with the logic of the society it is supposedly resisting, as it is being carried out by individuals who since birth have been forced to internalize this society's values and logic. This leads to situations where we allow ourselves to be convinced that we need leaders, or bureaucratic organizations, mere changes in state policy, or more negotiations with those in control. We should have learned by now, however, that such compromises only allow the current order to continue (with slight changes), or permit new systems of tyranny and control to replace the old.

So maybe we can learn something from the Free West Papua movement. The world of industrial capitalism stands in stark, bleak contrast to the communal jungle societies of native West Papua. The native West Papuans have nothing to gain by submitting to the will of capitalist globalization. But we don't have anything to gain by submitting to the capitalists either. Are our modern conveniences really all that great? Is a life of work and

stress the best we can offer our children? How much longer can we bare to let every aspect of our lives be determined by state control and economic imperative? The tribal warriors of West Papua have taken their stand-- freedom or death. And so should we. No more reforms, no more compromises, until all of us are free to regain complete, unmediated control over our own lives.

This is not necessarily meant to suggest that everyone should immediately quit their jobs and go purchase guns (or long-bows). Many of us are too busy just trying to survive and feed our families. But with some inspiration, critical thought, and collective effort, we can build the foundation of a future society while avoiding the pit-falls of reformism. And perhaps one day soon the world's exploited and dispossessed will rise in a revolt that will tear down the towers of capitalist tyranny once and for all.



As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Anything, no matter what to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

I often found myself regretting my own existence, and wishing myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed.

Frederick Douglass,
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave

Despite its incoherencies and internal inadequacies, the anti-roads movement expressed a side of the class struggle. It did so by attacking (theoretically) the ideology of capitalist progress, and by resisting (practically) the attempts to further alienate people from their immediate environment, by turning it into dead space whose only purpose is the facilitation of the dictatorship of the economy. For those who took part in these struggles, the potential for moving beyond its immediate limitations was visible --and by many, this was realised.

Scientific progress (2), the ideological filter for the justification of capitalist modernisation, was exposed as rooted in capital's interests. Democracy, the powerful ideology of capital, was (practically, at least) rejected and replaced by collective action. Many of the seemingly uninterrupted plans for the creation of massive roads were seriously delayed and, in some cases, abandoned.

In the process of its development, the anti-roads movement created a community of struggle against capital and the state, but --as it can be observed today -- one which was only a small island within the capitalist desert. However inspiring and creative the communities of struggle of the anti-roads movement were, they were problematically based on the limits of an ecological movement (not to mention subculture and life--stylism) (3). Even though in some cases positive links were made with the locals, these never managed to move beyond immediate necessity and towards the formation of a long-standing basis for anti-capitalist struggles.

Despite its antagonistic relation to capitalist modernisation, the anti-roads movement was unable to break its isolation and to transform itself into a generalised movement which would link the ecological movement (by overcoming its inherent reformism) to the overall movement against capital in its totality. As is usually the case with movements that fail to address their history critically, today the direct action movement is unable to realise that its foundations lay on the alienated result of struggles which never managed to contest capitalist reality in its totality. Based on the corpse of subculture and life--stylism, the direct action movement finds itself rejuvenating ideologies which were already wrong when they first appeared. It fails to understand its inherent contradictions, replacing critique with an --almost -- incomprehensible enthusiasm.

People have tried to overcome the problems arising in the direct action scene by claiming it is essentially a problem of theory and practice. The two of course are not separate. Whoever claims that 'theoretical' interventions are inferior to 'practical' ones is either stupid or paternalistic. The two complement each other or they are both useless. To prioritise one over the other is simply to separate our struggle against capital and to justify the existing division of labour which gives a raison d'être to the numerous 'professional revolutionaries'. The problems faced by the direct action scene are not, in this respect, the results of a contradiction between theory and practice. Both theory and practice of the direct action movement are reflections of our present situation, primarily characterised by the absence of a widespread movement contesting of capitalist normality. In this environment, it is not a surprise that the direct action movement seems stuck in its contradictions.

In a sense, the two are not in contradiction. Movements are never homogenous (practically or theoretically) but rather consist of contradictions and immediate limitations, which could potentially be overcome the more the movement develops. Moreover, however much the official language of a movement represents its content, no homogeneity exists: the people involved in re-appropriations and violent acts of disorder are not necessarily the same who draw up the ideology underlying the actions. At the same time, contrary to appearances, there is nothing intrinsically contradictory between having the desire to destroy the existing world and its glass window and having misconceived ideas of the same world. The history of the revolutionary movement against capitalism is full of examples of such tendencies.

But the above explanation quickly dissolves into a problematic excuse, especially when it is used to pre-empt any radical critique of these struggles. In the two previous issues we carried what was later to be termed a harsh and unjustified attack on the expressed theory of the events leading up to J18. We were essentially attacked for being too dismissive, arrogant, and 'idealistic' when dealing with J18. Some of the criticisms expressed were truthful. Our analysis of J18 was indeed problematically focused on the expressed ideology of the movement and not its real content. It would definitely be more accurate and complete to look at the history of the movement that inspired actions such as J18, and to have a more radical approach to its limitations.



However, and without getting into arguments about how our critique was practically and temporally limited (we were, after all, writing before J18 happened and could not have known exactly how it would develop), our critique has largely been confirmed. Regardless of the radical expressions of actions such as J18 and the 'battles' in Seattle (1), most of our critics end up with dismissing any critique of the ideology of the movement, i.e. part of its content. In an attempt to counter-react against our critique, the result is a rather uncritical approach to reformist and reactionary expressions. There are no apologies to be made. Radical critique is not about exchanging compliments, but about looking at the limitations of movements which claim to be anti-capitalist and trying to contribute to their development. The task of over-emphasising the 'sexy and inspiring' sides is better left to the various direct action conferences and gatherings, whose only purpose seems to be exactly that: big doses of self-reassurance and the absence of critical engagement.

The direct action movement primarily comes out of the anti-roads struggles of the early 90's. Developing as a response to the attempts to accommodate part of the emerging needs of capital which took the form of ambitious road-building schemes, the anti-roads movement was a struggle both ancient -reminiscent as it was of the peasants' attempts to resist the early stages of capital accumulation through land occupations - and contemporary -resisting the needs of advanced (western-European) capitalist development.



INTERFERENCE EXPECTED

We reprint this essay from Killing King Abacus #1. Fortunately, more anarchists are coming to recognize mass media's role in maintaining and perpetuating capitalism. During April's anti-FTAA protests in Quebec City, demonstrators acted appropriately by vandalizing and destroying vehicles, cameras, and other equipment belonging to the corporate media.

CAUGHT IN THE WEB OF DECEPTION: Anarchists and the Media

As long as the present social order exists, it will be impossible to avoid interaction with the various facets of the power structure. Those of us who call ourselves anarchists need to choose to make these interactions clearly adversarial and conflictual, reflecting our desire to destroy the power structure completely. Such a choice requires knowledge of the enemy. Almost every anarchist recognizes that the state and capital are facets of the power structure and has some minimal understanding of how these function as such. Increasing numbers of anarchists are recognizing that technology and ideology are also part of the network of power. One would think that from this they would draw the conclusion that the technological system for the dissemination of ideology, the media (I use the word media to refer specifically to this *system* in its totality, not to refer to specific tools it uses to carry out its function, since some of these tools can be used in a different manner, even against this function), is an inherent part of the power structure and, therefore, an enemy of all rebellion and of every attempt to create free life. Yet even in face of the intense concentration of the media into a very few mega-corporational hands (a fact that should reveal something of its nature), there are still some anarchists who will directly-and in a nonconflictual manner- interact with it in an attempt to communicate anarchist ideas on its terrain. This shows a lack of understanding of how the media functions.

The media plays a specific role in the power structure, a role that, in a democratic state, becomes not only essential, but also central to the functioning of power. But before continuing, it is necessary to confront the illusions many have about democracy. While it is true that democracy can merely mean a decision-making process which offers all involved a say or a vote in each decision (why this is incompatible with anarchy is a subject best dealt with at another time for the sake of brevity), in the present era, democracy is also and more

essentially a system of state and social power which maintains social peace by allowing the expression of the broadest spectrum of opinions. The democratic state is able to allow such a broad spectrum of opinion precisely because opinions are basically substanceless. Opinions are ideas that have been drained of all vitality. Separated from life and from any projectual basis, they have become harmless blathering that ultimately strengthens the democratic state by making it appear tolerant and open as compared to feudal or dictatorial states.

From this, the political function of the media should be obvious. It is the mediator and processor of democratic opinion. It devours the complexities of life and social interaction, of international relations and insurgency, of cultural breakdown and economic necessity... the totality of reality in the present, and mashes them to mush between its teeth, then digests them and shits out... turds. All of the complexities, all of the vitality, all connection to real life has been leached out, and we are left to decide whether these nearly identical brown lumps stink or not. The reality from which these turds were produced is so distant that we "know" that we can't effect it directly, so instead we buy the binary logic of the democratic state, argue over the stinkiness of turds, and vote for those politicians whose bullshit exudes the sweetest aroma. To be for or against this war, that law, whatever candidate, policy or program is no threat whatsoever to power. The purpose of the media is precisely to promote the predigested thinking that keeps us passive in the face of a distant reality, always ready to choose between the options offered by the democratic state, options that all end up subjecting the chooser to the power of state and capital.

The media has another central function. It is the creator of images for consumption. It creates celebrities and personalities for people to look up to and vicariously live through. It creates role images for people to imitate in order to invent their "identity". It creates images of events separated from and placed above life. It is through these images, ingested uncritically, that people are to view and interpret the world, formulating their opinions out of this virtual unreality. To the extent that the media succeeds, the result is a passive, predictable population consuming the trash dished out by the social order.

In choosing to seek to get one's ideas across through the media, one is choosing to feed these ideas to this masticating monster, to offer one's self to this life-draining ghoul. For anarchists this makes no sense. It is impossible for the media to portray anarchism as a living praxis or anarchists as complex multi-dimensional individuals. It is therefore not possible to express anarchist ideas in a worthwhile way through this forum. The ideas will be chewed up and shat out as images-of freaks, of intellectual brooders, of street rioters-but essentially as *images* not living, acting beings. The media is part of the power structure, and, as such, is our enemy. We can't play their game and win.

An outstanding example of how this process works can be seen on the segment about anarchists that appeared on *60 Minutes* shortly after the demonstrations against the WTO in Seattle. This twelve-minute collage of interviews and images was probably the best anarchists could expect from cooperating with the media. And from start to finish the media carried out its task. From over two hours of interviews and several hours of video footage from events in Seattle, the show's editors selected what they (or their bosses) wanted to use to make up this brief segment. Using the title, "The New Anarchists", already these experts in mediation had made a separation between the viewers and these new "celebrities", this new "subculture". The image-building specialists interviewed the one they called the "philosophical guide" separately

BSN's Intro to *Practice and Ideology in the Direct Action Movement*.

The following essay is reprinted from issue #8 of Undercurrent Journal from the U.K. While intended as an analysis of the British direct action movement, many of the critiques in this essay hold relevance to the direct action movement here in the U.S. False activist "communities"; idealization and lack of analysis of struggles in the third world; misunderstanding of capitalism; and a reluctance to confront hierarchies within "non-hierarchical" activist organizations are among many problems so perceptively challenged.

Before deciding to print this essay, we debated amongst ourselves whether the conclusion drawn is too harsh. Is the direct action movement in the U.S. in fact "going nowhere"? We agreed that in its' present form, this movement is indeed going nowhere. Feelings of rage and the longing for community expressed by many of those active in this movement give us hope that there is still potential for the emergence of a revolutionary social movement that will truly pose a threat to the reigning order. For such a movement to manifest itself, however, will require that it break out of the mold of Days of Action; campaigns against specific corporations; legislation and electoral politics; and scenes, cliques, and subcultures.

Practice and Ideology in the Direct Action Movement from *Undercurrent Journal* #8

*"The call to abandon their illusions about their condition,
is a call to abandon a condition which requires illusions."*

Recent explosions of discontent (such as in Seattle in November or in the City of London on J18) have expressed themselves in ways not worthy of their radical practice. The radical content of their practice (such as violence against the police, destruction of property, the sense of collective strength against the state) has been accompanied by a distorted image of capitalism which insists in seeing capital as nothing more than the financial centres, the 'dodgy' companies (as if there are 'non-dodgy' companies), and the shadowy international organisations (such as the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank, etc). They identify capital with its most superficial appearances, failing to see it in its totality. On the other hand, these actions definitely inspire the people involved in them, they do cause considerable trouble for the gatekeepers of law and order, and they do spoil the routine of the day-to-day business of the muppets who are being targeted. The problem immediately arises: how can the reformist language of the protests co-exist with their subversive practice?

Against Work?

Or Just Fucking Lazy?



Yes, we all know that work sucks. Every wage-slave has experienced the drudgery of repeating menial tasks, producing things for which we have no use, being ordered around by an asshole boss, or being expected to provide friendly customer service to a bunch of ungrateful jerks who act like you were born to serve them. Work sucks because it forces us into an alienated situation where we must perform a specialized role, one which we would never perform under normal circumstances, and which we have no control over-- all so that the lifeless capitalist machine of commodity production and exchange can continue rolling forward. Meanwhile our humanity is lost and our lives are wasted-- just so that a few jerks can get rich.

But what's the alternative? In a state-less and class-less society we would still have to do things like grow and gather food, make tools, build and maintain dwellings, sew clothes, and countless other tasks. While the passionate sense of creativity and communal spirit surrounding such efforts would provide feelings of pleasure and fulfillment nonexistent under the current system, no world could ever be perfect, and there would still be some times when we would feel tired out. Likewise, in order to make the revolution necessary to create the world we so longingly desire, we must at times do things we may not necessarily enjoy doing-- like spending hours in front of a copying machine or putting our bodies in dangerous situations where we may risk being beaten, arrested, or killed.

It's easy to let this cruel world get us down. None of us are strangers to feelings of depression and despair. But dwelling on such feelings will only ensure that this sick society continues to perpetuate itself. We won't win the revolution by lying in bed. So let's get off our asses and start to create the world we want to live in!

from the other anarchists; the interviewer and this one to whom the media attributed a guiding role sat face-to-face as peers. The other anarchists were interviewed as a group, some of them seated on the floor, the camera angle leaving the impression that all were seated lower than the interviewer. A viewer who didn't know better would be left with the impression that these "new anarchists" are followers of a leader, even if he only called a "philosophical guide". The interviewer very clearly directed what was said with his questions-- this is his specialty after all. By allowing the interview to pass in normal fashion, these anarchists played right into the hands of the media. By answering the questions, they weakened their arguments, fell into clichés such as the dull old saw about property destruction not being violence and helped to further marginalize and spectacularize themselves. I have not yet seen a media depiction of these "new anarchists", of the "Eugene anarchists (a term that anarchists in Eugene would do well to destroy as soon as possible), or whatever term the particular journalist, interviewer or newsperson chooses to use that was not this manipulative--because that's how the media functions.

In the wake of the demonstrations in Seattle, there has been a lot of attention paid to anarchists in the media, particularly focusing on the question of property destruction. Much has come out of this that I find disturbing though not surprising. Some anarchists have begun to worry about their media image. Thus there are those anarchists who condemn property destruction because it will give anarchists a bad public image. But these are so ridiculous that they disturb me less than those who publicly insist that "property destruction is not violence". By using this argument that has come out frequently in the media, anarchists are letting themselves get drawn into the values of this society; they are measuring their words to fit them into the viewpoint of democratic dialogue. This viewpoint seeks to force revolutionary action to fit the moral equation of violence/nonviolence. For anarchists who determine their actions for themselves,

on their own terms, such equations are useless; they have no significance. Central to anarchist activity in the present is the necessity to destroy the state, capital, and all institutions of power and authority in order to create the possibility for every individual to fully realize herself as he sees fit. Such total destruction -the destruction of a world encompassing civilization- will be violent. There is no sense in denying or apologizing for this. What each of us does to achieve this is determined by each individual in terms of her desires, dreams, capabilities and circumstances- in terms of the life he is seeking to create for herself. It has no relationship to any sort of morality. Therefore, as anarchists, we have no use for dealing with such questions as: "Is property destruction violence or not?" "Is this an act of self-defense or offensive attack?" We have no reason to care. Our desire is to attack and destroy all power structures and this determines our actions. These other questions are based on the hypocritical moral rules of power that serve no other purpose than to place weighted chains





on our ability to act. So of what use is it to us to speak to the media about these questions on its terms, using its guidelines of how to speak of these matters and following its protocol? In fact, of what use is it to us to talk to the media at all?

In dealing with the media on its terrain, one chooses to give up determining one's own action on one's own terms. As the *60 minutes* episode made so clear, dealing with the media with the media on its terrain is accepting delegation. One turns one's ideas over to the masters of "communication" to be masticated into more opinions in the ideological marketplace. One gives the reality of one's life over to these experts in separation to be turned into 60-second images of isolated events. One turns the activity of communication over to those whose specialty is the one way "communication" of devitalized, pre-digested non-ideas and non-events that create social consensus. And then one complains about how badly one was *represented* in the media. Why did one choose to be represented at all? The choice to accept media representation is no less acceptance of delegation than voting or unionism. The rejection of delegation, so central to an anarchist and insurrectional perspective, includes the refusal to deal with the media on its terms.

If we take self-determination and self-activity as fundamental bases for anarchist practice, the way to communicate our ideas is clearly to create *our own* means of communication. Graffiti, posters, communiqués, papers, magazines, and pirate radio can all be used to express anarchist ideas without them through the masticating mechanisms of the media. These self-determined means of communication can be distinguished from the media in that they are not attempts to mediate opinions and images while claiming objectivity and dishing out pre-digested pabulum to a passive audience; they are actual attempts on the part of anarchists to express their ideas not only in the words but also in the method through which they go about expressing them. Of course these methods, which we can take into our own hands, will not get out to nearly as many people as a mainstream newspaper, magazine or television show. But such considerations could only be of significance to those who want to evangelize, to those who view anarchy as a belief system to which we must convert people if there is ever to be a revolution. To paraphrase some Italian comrades: if one has no commodities to sell, of what use are neon signs? And in the era of the reign of capital, evangelism-even anarchist evangelism- is ideological marketeering. To those whose interest is creating their lives as their own and destroying the society that prevents this, such marketeering is worthless.

Unfortunately, since the anti-WTO actions in Seattle, the media has been drooling over the anarchist morsel, and there have been anarchists willing to give them what it wants. Undoubtedly, the media will continue to hound anarchists for as long as anarchy is a marketable item. It is therefore necessary that we anarchists recognize that the media is part of the power structure just like the state, capital, religion, law...In other words, the media is our enemy and we should treat it as such. In this light, the action of three Italian anarchists -Arturo, Luca and Drew-becomes exemplary. When a journalist invaded the funeral of their comrade in search of a juicy morsel of news, they beat him.

And maybe that's the real hope for change.

That's the real hope for change, of course. 10,000 or 50,000 people can't really change a society, of course we need more people. We aren't stupid. We know we can only win when we are more, when we're the majority of the people. So we have many papers, magazines, radio, demos, many things where we try to educate people, to make contact with other groups in society who are not necessarily autonomous people. For example, in Wackersdorf, where the government is building up a nuclear re-processing plant in Bavaria, and many people are living in this area who are very conservative in their way of thinking, living, voting, etc., but then these people realized that they didn't want this nuclear plant in their area and they started protesting and fighting back. Also many autonomous people were fighting back against this plant, and so conservative people and autonomous people were working together. Many people made good contacts and good friends...and many of these people have changed, realizing that the government doesn't really give a shit about them. And I was down there, at the fences which they built around the construction area, and

over half the people at the protests were from the area. Many very old people, all these people were no longer in illusion...they saw the police brutality. I was really amazed how they've changed their way of thinking after they saw the police violence. And we were down there trying to break through the fence, which wasn't totally possible with about 20,000 cops inside, and they were throwing tear-gas, etc., and an old man came up with us and he said: "This is really great, what you are doing. You know, I'm really too old to do this, I'm really not able to break the fence with a bolt-cutter or to saw it, but you know what? I would use dynamite!" It was one of the most positive experiences I've had with people who have different ways of thinking and living. And I saw the possibility that if we fight with these people we're going to be a bigger movement. It gave me a lot of optimism and hope, that it's possible to build a movement capable of stopping the people who rule the society. And it's not just that I'm fighting **against** something, I'm also fighting **for** something, to express my love and feelings, to explore-something I can't do in this society. I'm caught.

Thanks a lot for talking.

Okay, and I hope the struggle continues in Canada as in West Germany, and one day we're gonna make it. Ciao!



resistance without getting caught up in this oppressive machine. But everyone who is part of the revolutionary autonomous movement, they know that the people who rule the country don't wanna give up just like that, not voluntarily. For example, this year there was a hunger strike by 48 political prisoners from R.A.F. (Red Army Fraction), autonomous and anti-imperialist groups, to fight against the practice of isolation in prison. They demanded association, free medical care, open political debate, so we as an autonomous movement organized a big, widespread campaign to back up the demands; we had big, fucking huge demos, in Hamburg with 8,000, 10,000 in Bonn, many small independent anti-imperialist groups attacked the multi-national corporations with incendiary bombs, we had all kinds of struggles to back up the demands. And it's important to show that the autonomous movement doesn't forget the prisoners, and they are a part of our movement.



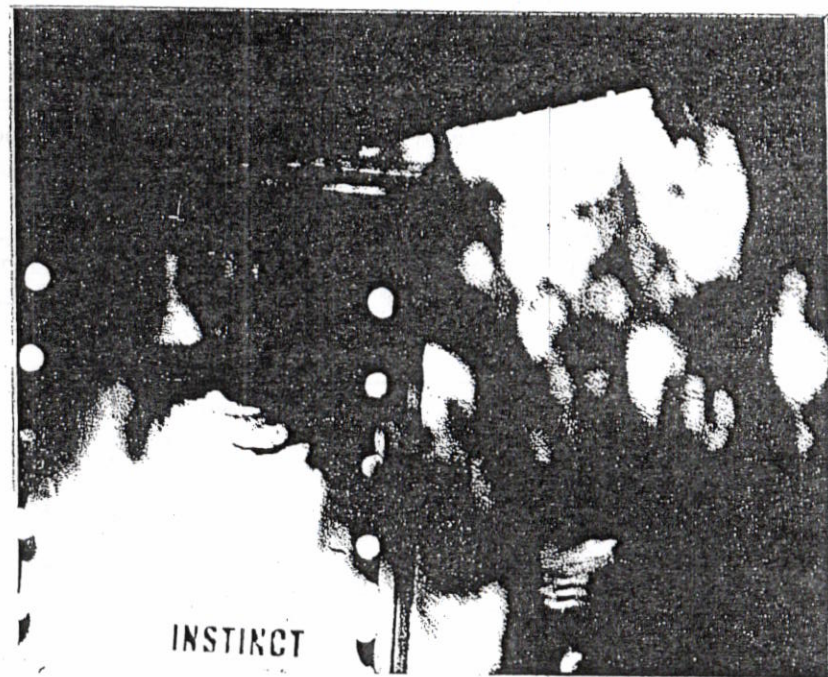
Another major position of the autonomous movement is that it is not pacifist, the movement is not only supporting militant, direct actions--the armed struggle--they also practice it. The autonomous movement sees revolutionary violence against an oppressive society as a part of the resistance. This is seen in attacks on property, militant demos, smashing windows of sex shops, riots; this is all part of the resistance. It's not that important how you are fighting back, violent or non-violent, it's what you are fighting for.

What are some ways the autonomous movement fights against patriarchy?

Uh, one militant group, the Roten Zora (Red Zora) is a militant feminist group, and they are a really effective guerilla group. They did the action against Adler, a big multi-national corporation who produce clothing. And this corporation has some factories in South Korea, and here wimmin are working for maybe 20 cents an hour, and these wimmin face sexual harassment, exploitation, and they demanded--in a strike--better work conditions, higher wage, end sexual harassment. Adler didn't give a fuck about this, so Red Zora attacked Adler with incendiary bombs in 10 different places in West Germany, causing approximately \$10 million damage, backing up the wimmin's demands in South Korea. And they were saying, we're going to fucking blow you away. So Adler was forced to do as the workers demanded. This is a good example of militant actions having a positive effect, and can support the struggle of wimmin in the periphery countries, against sexism, against multi-national corporations. It raised consciousness, and Red Zora released statements on the actions which were reprinted in many magazines, so people knew what this corporation was doing and why it was attacked.

We also have many anti-imperialist people who are part of the revolutionary movement who are not quite autonomous in the way that they are organized. They're quite influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideas, but most of them are pretty much unorthodox communists; they aren't into parties, but they're not like the autonomous movement, and they don't have as much criticism of state-socialist countries, and they're also supporting more Marxist-Leninist urban guerrilla groups like the R.A.F. The autonomous movement supports their politics in a way, but are really critical to their statements and politics.

I think the autonomous movement has an effect on the society because many, many people are getting pissed off, frustrated, and they'll realize that they're exploited too, by the state. So, of course, they're sympathizing with the autonomous movement in a way, they're saying we should connect more with these people because maybe they're fighting for something I'm fighting for too....



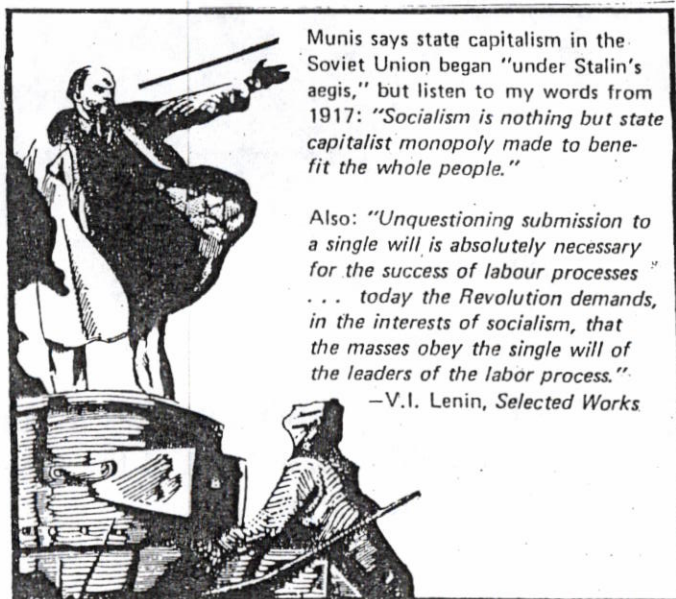
"coping with cancer" ...what it takes to survive:
(keep your head down, get out of the way and
just shut up!)

"When we wake up in the morning and put our feet on the ground we must have a good reason for getting up. If we don't it makes no difference whether we are anarchists or not. We might as well stay in bed and sleep."

Alfredo Bonnano, *The Anarchist Tension*

A review of Gilles Dauve and Francois Martins' The Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement

When one mentions the word communist, even among anarchist circles one is frequently met with perhaps rightful hostility. Of course, historically what was and is conceived of as manifestations of communism were nothing but state capitalist regimes where the population was forcefully subservient to the party bureaucracy. In theory such regimes extrapolated the weak and authoritarian side of Karl Marx's writing and hardened it into a dogma and ideology which one- whether as a member of the party or general population- was forced to live up to.



Munis says state capitalism in the Soviet Union began "under Stalin's aegis," but listen to my words from 1917: "Socialism is nothing but state capitalist monopoly made to benefit the whole people."

Also: "Unquestioning submission to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of labour processes . . . today the Revolution demands, in the interests of socialism, that the masses obey the single will of the leaders of the labor process."

—V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*

As a former adherent of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, I've witnessed the personification of ideology in self-avowed communist parties such as the Spartacist League. Many people I met and worked with were the ultimate personification of ideology-rigid, fixed, and brazenly authoritarian in personality and actions. On the converse, younger individuals joined such organizations because it was and is to many- including myself at the time- perceived as actually participating in tangible activity (IE newspaper sales, and "militant" demonstrations). Whether that activity contributes to a practice beyond that of propagandizing is the subject of another essay. Let's just say practice as conceived of as propagandizing in the form of trying to gain ideological adherents has seen

How does the movement show this solidarity, how do they support these struggles? How do they see this as a part of their day to day lives?

One way for example is going in the streets and demonstrating. The last demo I went to before coming to Canada was in Hamburg. Autonomous and anti-imperialist groups called a demo in support of the Palestinians, the Intifada, and around 3,000 people participated. We went down the streets in Hamburg and there were Palestinian solidarity groups, people from the P.F.L.P. (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), who made a speech, one person from the autonomous movement who made a speech as to why it was important to link the nationwide struggle in West Germany with the international struggle, because the world economic system is organized internationally and it's exploiting people all over the world, so of course it's really important that we as a movement- it doesn't matter if you live in Canada or West Germany- organize the struggle also internationally and be in solidarity with the struggle all over the world; in China, Palestine, Azania, basically the people who are fighting for their right to survive, to live without hunger...and how we show it is going to demos, leaflets, magazines, putting out info. And of course there is the struggle by militant groups, guerrilla groups, like for example the Revolutionary Cells who are attacking the South African businesses, businesses in South Africa or Israel, for example Daimler-Benz supplies the Israeli army with vans and the South African police with vans, cars. So there is a widespread resistance in demos, benefit shows, militant direct actions...and anytime a scumbag from one of these countries is coming we organize big demos....



What are some ways people are living outside of the capitalist system...are people doing that?

It's not entirely possible to live outside of the capitalist system because you live in it, and there isn't any real free space where you can live totally independent, because society affects you all the time. But of course we do try and fight for free spaces, for example squatting, which gives you a certain kind of free space because you don't respect paying rent to housing companies or landlords. And this is a way we try to show a different way of living, and squatting to me is a kind of anti-capitalist struggle because you refuse to pay rent, you don't accept the idea of "property." It's also a de-controlled area we live differently. We don't live isolated, we live together. Like 50-60 people live together, and it's really important for communication, exchanging info, within the movement.

And I suppose by squatting it means not being isolated as much as in a workplace....

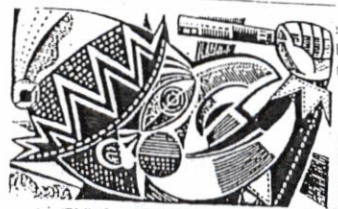
For sure. And that's all about what we're fighting for. In Kreuzberg people work and pay like 50-60% of their wage for rent. You work 40 hours a week and 50% of your wage goes to rent. That's totally unjustified, totally against people. Right now there is a campaign in West Berlin to organize a rent boycott also, and now there are 8 big squatted houses in West Berlin, also in Hamburg in the Hafanstrasse. And as I said it's really important for communication, because like in Vancouver you have say 10 different houses, and so the exchange of information isn't that great. You don't have daily discussions, which is important for organization.

So what kind of repression does the autonomous movement face?

I think every movement faces oppression by the government, because if these movements are revolutionary movements, the people who control the country, the government, the corporations, businesses, they want to protect their capitalist, imperialist and patriarchal society, of course! They try to dam up the revolutionary struggle. Many people are arrested, sent to jail, and we must look at how we can organize

So maybe you could begin by telling us how it is living in West Berlin and how it differs from other West German cities?

It's not that different than living in big cities like Hamburg, Frankfurt.... There might be some differences, for instance West Berlin is like an island, surrounded by a wall, and so people live really crowded in a city of 2 million. And especially in the wintertime it's getting really depressive. I'm living in Kreuzberg, and it's one of the poorest neighborhoods, and you could compare this area with say the Lower East Side of New York, with large apartment buildings, many people living crowded together, not much green, and many people are greatly frustrated. Another thing about West Berlin, located in East Germany, is you must drive three or four hours to West Germany and may stay in West Berlin because maybe they don't have the money to drive out, so especially many poor people have no choice and must stay in West Berlin. And I have stayed two to three years in West Berlin without leaving for a week, etc., so it's a kind of prison in a way. You're surrounded by a wall and to leave the city the atmosphere is different than say Vancouver because you have to cross a border, to show your I.D., have money, etc. Also, West Berlin isn't really apart of West Germany: West Germany has 11 federal states including W. Berlin, but W. Berlin doesn't have the right to send politicians to the federal government to make decisions. It's a similar system to the U.S.: from each state they send a senator to the congress. West Berlin doesn't have this right. And it's also a military zone. We have 30,000 soldiers, Americans, British, French, all divided into their respective sectors. And sometimes it's really fucked up. In your neighborhood, you see them driving down the street standing in their jeep with a machine gun and pointing at you. They



don't shoot, but they play all kinds of head games.

It's like an occupied city then?

Yeah, you don't feel like it's your city or anything. It's a result of the second world war. The Americans have total power, they can overturn the West Berlin government and the police. When Ron Reagan came to West Berlin in 1982 and around 10,000 people were fighting back the cops in the street, the U.S. administration was considering sending the military into the streets, and America has a "right" to do it, it's a constitutional right.

What are the origins of the autonomous movement? What are the struggles you're fighting for?

Uh, the origins of the autonomous movement are found in the beginning of the '80s, they have their background in all sorts of social movements, like squatting, struggles against the N.A.T.O. runway in Frankfurt, against nuclear power, environmental destruction. The major goals of the movement, I would say, are struggling for self-determination, for a society without power, against capitalism, against imperialism, fighting against states, and a really important part of the movement is fighting against the patriarchy and sexist society. The autonomous movement isn't like an organization. It's many independent groups joining in, and of course they all have different experiences, they work on different projects, but the major things that unite autonomous groups together are the points of anti-statist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchy, and fighting for a totally self-determined society. It is also very international, supporting the liberation struggles in the 3 continents, the people in Azania (S. Africa), in Palestine, in El Salvador. And of course the movement is very critical of so-called "socialist" states such as Cuba. And when they support liberation struggles they support the peoples' struggle, not just the party.



its day (if it ever had one). Informal networks of individuals, with similar objectives and proclivities, collectively coming together on projects when possible and individually when collective projects do not seem to come to fruition, is seemingly the direction revolutionary theory and practice are forced to head. In this sense the intention is not to gain converts to the religion of anarchism or communism, but to participate in concrete projects and from this actively intervene in concrete struggle. Practice as conceived of as a means by which to encourage individuals to join your revolutionary clique is doing nothing to further the class struggle, but continuing to foster a sense of false community.

Similarly, ideology can easily creep its way into anarchism. Many anarchists have an almost automatic and dogmatic response to anything that is slightly Marxist or Marxian. Given that many perceive its history to be lodged in authoritarianism and manipulation this is somewhat understandable. Nonetheless it still behooves me that self-avowed freethinkers would allow themselves to merely react in an irrational way against anything even slightly Marxian influenced. After all the critique of capitalism starts largely with Marx's three volume book *Capital*.

So with this in mind Gilles Dauve and Francois Martins' book the *Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement* is an excellent introduction to the communist critique of capital and the state. The foreword (or as they call foreword) entitled *Out of the Future* starts out with a new introduction, which helps situate the text within the context of late capitalism. The text itself was written in 1969 and 1972 and published in English by Black& Red in 1974. To quote the introduction "Capital has invaded all life, and determines the way we feed our cat, how we visit or bury our friends to such an extent that our objective can only be the social fabric, invisible, all-encompassing, impersonal... Our most vital need: others, seems so close and so far at the same time... When a sizable minority fed up with virtual reality starts making possibilities real, revolution will rise again, terrible and anonymous". (13) This introduction is an excellent examination of capitalism and potential resistance in its late phase.

Much of the beginning is devoted to defining terms such as wage labor, commodities, capital, competition, crisis, proletariat and revolution, etc. This serves as a useful contribution as it attempts to assess such terms within the framework of negation. With this definition and negation, an analysis of the movement of communism is provided, which allows for a more dialectical approach. At times it appears as if this transcendence is tainted with an almost fixed ideal (which is perhaps due to the often mechanical theory of history Marx teetered on in many of his writings) to which communism is subject to, rather than an actual supersession of all fixed ideals within the context of struggle. It nonetheless makes for a more balanced reading. The subheading entitled "Communism as a

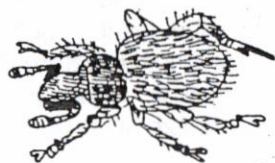
Present Social Movement" does however help clarify this and situate communism within the present context. In this a penetrating critique is made of those who perceive communism as an ideal to be established *after* the revolution. They go on to cite examples such as squatting and rejection of assembly line work as concrete sites of struggle where the world is not merely rejected, but the whole of capital is questioned through the transformation of exchange value (viewed merely for its ability to be bought and sold) into use value (the object is made use of without ascribing any sort of monetary value). "Such movements will be forced to become conscious of their acts, to understand what they are doing, in order to do it better." (40)

The second half of this book is an analysis of the class struggle, which was written soon after May 1968. In his introduction to this part Dauve notes that if this text were written today historical data would be different. Nonetheless it contains an insightful analysis of the role parties and unions play in recuperating the class struggle. Under the subheading reading "Forms of Action Which Cannot Be Recuperated: Sabotage and Downtiming" it is stated that; "Destructive acts are part of an attempt to destroy the mediation of wage labor as the only form of social community. In the silence of the proletariat, sabotage appears as the first stammer of human speech." (56) In other words, in the absence of collective refusal the individual reacts against his own alienation through acts of sabotage.

This book complemented with *Aufheben Journal* from England, *Undercurrent Journal* from England (a more polemical variant of *Aufheben* though they are very similar), and an examination of this pamphlet all serve as useful introductions to anti-state communism. The pamphlet itself contains vague references to subjects I would have liked to have seen expanded upon. The somewhat confusing references to production and consumption as well as the question of technology, are all subjects which could have been expanded upon. At any rate, this book as well as anything taken at face value- including *anarchism*- without a critical analysis can easily degenerate into dogma, but that is only if we let it.

Through a critical theory of capital, the social relations it produces, and the state we can better understand how such operate, while struggling daily against capitalism and the state. This pamphlet is an important contribution to that project.

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Thoughts on Black Blocs, and Introduction to "Interview With a West Berlin Autonomist"

While black blocs have recently become a popular tactic among anarchists at large demonstrations in the U.S. and Canada, there is little understanding of its origins. Black Blocs originate from the autonomist struggles in many parts of Western Europe (roughly) during the 1970s, '80s, and early '90s. The intention underlying many of these movements was to create autonomous spaces where individuals could enjoy more freedom while seeking to overthrow capitalism as a whole. Contrasting this is a tendency among anarchists in the U.S., who in an understandable quest for community, often end up reproducing the same alienating social interactions as the dominant society in their "scenes", subcultures, cliques, and "autonomous zones."

It seems that some anarchists are now trying to reproduce hierarchical and militaristic structures within black blocs. A recent issue of the Boston based "Barricada" zine (#7) printed "A Proposal to the Black Bloc from Within the Black Bloc: The Formation of a Tactical Facilitation Core," written by the "Green Mountain Anarchist Collective". This poorly written article proposes that Black Blocs at various demonstrations elect certain individuals and affinity groups within the bloc to specialized "tactical command" positions such as "acute tactical facilitator" and "general tactical facilitation core". While they claim that they "are not advocating the formalization of any authoritarian army structure," the authors offer no serious explanation as to how such tendencies would be avoided. We suggest that anti-authoritarians oppose this proposal and any others that seek to impose militaristic structures on autonomous affinity groups and individuals.

We also suggest that anarchists avoid fetishizing the Black Bloc tactic. While effective in certain situations, the Black Bloc tactic (and planned 'Days of Action' in general) in the current context are detached from any real revolutionary social movement.

The following interview, reprinted from "Endless Struggle #11, 1989 (no longer in print), highlights the struggle, in West Berlin, of individuals who indeed aspired to participate in a social movement for revolutionary social change. Though having its shortcomings, the autonomist movement offers many lessons for our contemporary struggles against the state and capital.

For more information on the origins of the Black Bloc, check out the article by Daniel Dylan Young entitled "Masking Up and the Black Bloc: A Pre-Seattle History" in *Green Anarchy* #5. For more information on the autonomists in general, check out The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomist Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life by George Katsiaficas, and Cracking the Movement: Squatting Beyond the Media by Adilkno.